

Council Meeting

St. Pauls Milton

September 28, 2009

Congratulations to St. Paul's and the leadership team that is moving ahead to take St. Paul's into the future. Halton Presbytery celebrates with you the signing of the Letter of Intent. You are an emerging church – ready to serve – ready to thrive.

One of the main differences between alive and thriving churches and churches that are dying is that the thriving churches have focussed on their purpose and are making courageous choices to live by their purpose. Churches that are dying and will not live beyond 25 years are churches focussed on survival. Put another way, churches seeking to maintain – perish as institutions of the past, while churches seeking to live by their mission - thrive.

Tony Robinson asks churches – What is your business? And so, how is business?

You, the leaders of St. Paul's, have done the hard work of identifying your purpose – your business – your mission and your ministry through the work of strategic planning. That hard work is paying off as you are clear about what you need to accomplish your mission. A church building is a tool that we use to accomplish a purpose. It should not possess us but it is what God gives us to accomplish our mission. Our church building needs to be configured to the needs of our mission - this is the work in which you are engaged now. We need to focus on God and the will of God then we can focus on a building. We can see that you will be able to reach out to so many more with new facilities. You will have more money for mission.

We have seen congregations maintain their building while cutting staff – first the custodial staff and then the youth worker and then a half time minister – all the while heating and repairing a more and more demanding structure. You, the leaders of St. Paul's have refused to go in that direction and the Presbytery approves of your decision-making. You have kept your focus on the Lord and that is so commendable.

The Presbytery has been aware of the process of your decision-making. We have seen that you have been faithful in 3 ways:

- a. You have been faithful legally. You have sought to dot your i's and cross your t's. You have followed the United Church Manual in decision-making. You have sought the permission of the Presbytery with the support of the

Presbytery Finance and Property Committee. Now you begin the next stage of seeking Municipal approval for your development. In the Presbytery we can rest assured that you will do this legally and rightfully.

- b. You have been faithful morally. You the leadership of St. Paul's have sought to be respectful of all the people – church members, affiliates and community. You have graciously extended yourself time and again in your understanding and your patience. You have provided opportunity after opportunity for conversation.
  
- c. You have been faithful to the future well-being of St. Paul's by following a good business model. An investor is willing to take a risk, you are promised profitability with minimal danger of loss, the economy is recovering and Canada is coming out of a recession with an aging population in need of appropriate accommodation. You are planning for the future of this church.

There is one suggestion that I would like to make and that is concerning your 4 Task Forces. As you move into a new aspect of your development this is a good time to make sure that all of the participants are team players and have the time, energy and spirit to guide the church into the new development. It is important that all the members of the Task Forces be in full support of the development and totally committed so that there is a collective and cohesive front. This means that you should say thank you to the Task Forces for a job well done. The leaders then need to discern the nature of the Task Forces needed for the next stage of the development and recruit according to talents and spiritual gifts.

In conclusion let me say that St. Paul's leadership can rest assured that you have performed admirably through a very difficult time. As we begin another church year Halton Presbytery has trust in your leadership to guide St. Paul's with faith, grace and a Christ-centred focus. As Mission Development Officer it is our commitment that Halton Presbytery will support you and walk with you into the future.